



# National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *Louisville, KY*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Louisville for a Brownfields Pilot. The Louisville Empowerment Zone Brownfields Working Group plans to address brownfields in Louisville's heavy industrial corridor. The corridor encompasses 5,401 acres that include the community's most distressed neighborhoods. At least one quarter of the area stands vacant or severely under-used (converted to cheap warehouse space). Residents that are most affected by these brownfields represent the State's highest concentration of minority residents, and almost half live in poverty. Area neighborhoods suffer from a 30-year population drain, including a nearly twenty percent loss in population over the last decade.

Brownfields sites cost the City of Louisville approximately \$8.7 million annually in lost property tax revenues. Their presence is adversely affecting the City's nationally recognized success in developing affordable housing and revitalizing inner-city neighborhoods.

### OBJECTIVES

The Louisville Brownfields Pilot seeks to facilitate assessments and environmental cleanups which would not otherwise occur, and to measurably increase the

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Louisville, Kentucky*

**Date of Award:**  
September 1995

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets an industrial corridor in western Louisville composed of over 5,000 acres of mostly heavy industrialized property.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

rate and volume of older industrial land recycled to productive use through public and private investment. Specifically, the Pilot hopes to reduce barriers to investment in redevelopment that stem from environmental concerns. Success will be measured by completion of brownfield cleanups, addition of actual jobs for Enterprise Community residents, community acceptance of the process, and enhancement of the City tax base.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Created a Geographic Information System (GIS) Database that contains public information on environmental conditions of land in the Enterprise Community to publicize sites for investment, and target areas for cleanup and redevelopment. Data on Jefferson County's 275,000 parcels have already been entered into the Database;
- Actively conducted outreach to stakeholders regarding brownfields issues including: 1) bus tours of Louisville brownfields sites for the convention of American Planning Association; 2) presentations to IESD Small Cities Conference at University of Louisville; 3) collaboration with local reporters for feature articles on brownfields; and 4) meeting with community residents, and the industrial Realtors of the Board of Realtors; and
- Installed 13 wells to sample Louisville's aquifers. The City, Water Company, and the U. S. Geological Survey participated in the field work. Once the sampling results are received, the data will be entered into the Database.

The Pilot is:

- Establishing a streamlined process for cleanup under State regulations to reduce uncertainty of standards and time delays;
- Testing mechanisms that would allow a municipality to take title to a site to unite cleanup and redevelopment efforts; and
- Designing a brochure to support stakeholder outreach that will list the advantages of recycling brownfields.

## LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Louisville Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Worked on a burned-out building where owners were identified but not able to complete assessment and cleanup without assistance. The property has been cleared and sold to a neighboring business.
- Exploring how the City's brownfields program can take advantage of Community Development Bank and the Small Business Administration resources.
- The City of Louisville got a head start on their brownfields efforts by using funds from a \$75,000 EPA grant awarded to Kentucky's DNR in 1994 to conduct an assessment on a brownfields site on Garfield Avenue that an adjacent property owner wanted to use for expansion of his business. The assessment was completed and a remediation plan submitted to the Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet. The assessment was made available to the public for public comment in April 1997. The property is being held in the City's name pending State approval of the remediation plan. A prospective purchaser is waiting for results of the State review.
- The Louisville Empowerment Zone Brownfields Working Group worked on proposals for State legislation to reduce liability concerns and create a mechanism for closure on brownfields site cleanups. The amendment to the State's superfund law allows public entities to apply for State "assurance letters" which certify the State's determination that the property meets cleanup standards and poses no threat to human health or the environment.
- An international firm seeking to develop within the United States has used the Louisville Database to identify appropriate land in the brownfields area. Negotiations are pending.